

Prevention of Rabies in Humans:

Rabies Pre-exposure Prophylaxis Vaccination

WHO should receive Pre-exposure Prophylaxis Vaccination?

Pre-exposure vaccination (www.cdc.gov/rabies/specific_groups/travelers/pre-exposure_vaccinations.html) should be offered to the following persons:

- People in **frequent-risk groups**, such as **veterinarians and their staff, animal handlers (animal control officers, wildlife workers, animal shelter workers, zoo workers), rabies researchers, laboratory workers (who work with rabies virus), cavers/spelunkers.**
- Other people whose activities bring them into **frequent contact with rabies virus or potentially rabid bats, raccoons, skunks, cats, dogs, or other species at risk for having rabies.**
- **Some international travelers** and missionaries might be candidates for pre-exposure vaccination if they are likely to come in contact with animals in areas where dog or other animal rabies is enzootic and immediate access to appropriate medical care, including rabies vaccine and immune globulin, might be limited.

Routine pre-exposure prophylaxis is not recommended for the general U.S. population or for routine travelers to areas where rabies is not enzootic.

WHERE can Pre-exposure Prophylaxis be administered?

- [Local health departments](http://www.ncalhd.org/directors) (see <http://www.ncalhd.org/directors>)
- Private physicians and other healthcare providers
- Hospitals
- Travel clinics (see www.travelclinicsofamerica.com/travel_vaccines.html)

WHAT is the Pre-exposure Prophylaxis Regimen?

Three doses of rabies vaccine (1.0 mL intramuscular [deltoid] injection of RabAvert or Imovax) on **Days 0, 7 and 21 or 28** (see www.cdc.gov/rabies/specific_groups/travelers/pre-exposure_vaccinations.html).

FACTS about Pre-exposure Prophylaxis

- Pre-exposure Prophylaxis **does not eliminate** the need for rabies risk assessment and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) after a rabies exposure.
- **If a rabies exposure does occur in a pre-vaccinated person, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) should always be administered; however, the post-exposure regimen is simplified and reduced to:**
 - **Two doses of rabies vaccine on Days 0 and 3** (1.0 mL intramuscular injection of RabAvert or Imovax); **and**
 - **NO post-exposure human rabies immunoglobulin (HRIG)** is required.
- Pre-exposure prophylaxis may offer partial immunity if post-exposure prophylaxis is delayed or in areas of the world where modern products might not be available or less safe, cruder products might be used.
- Conserves use of rabies biologics in a population with known risk.
- Might provide some protection in the event of an unrecognized exposure.